(b) whether Government has any special project for protecting these historical monuments; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) There is no immediate danger to centrally protected historical monuments in coastal areas like Sun Temple, Konark and Jagannath Temple, Puri due to global warming.

(b) and (c) A groyne wall has been provided to Shore Temple at Mahabalipuram for protection against sea waves and Casuarina plantation has been provided at Sun Temple, Konark and Shore Temple, Mahabalipuram for protection against saline wind.

Entry fee for Taj Mahal

2974. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether through a notification dated 18th March, 2008, Government has reduced the entry fee for Taj Mahal from the earlier Rs. 750 to Rs. 20 applicable for only citizens of SAARC countries including Myanmar and Thailand;

(b) whether the collections from the entry fee for Taj Mahal is being shared between the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and the Agra Development Authority; and

(c) whether the Agra Development Authority is not complying with the new notification on entry fee for SAARC citizens and insists on its share of Rs. 500 an each ticket for SAARC nationals sold by ASI?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) Through a notification dated 5th March, 2008, the Archaeological Survey of India has brought the entry fee in respect of citizens of SAARC and BIMSTEC countries at par with Indian citizens.

(b) At Taj Mahal, ASI charges entry fee @Rs. 10/- from Indian visitors and nationals of SAARC and BIMSTEC countries. Foreigners of other nationalities are charged @Rs. 250/-. The Agra Development Authority charges Rs. 500/- from each foreign national including citizens of SAARC and BIMSTEC countries and Rs. 10/- from Indian visitors as Toll Tax (Path-kar).

(c) The notification issued by the Archaeological Survey of India applies only to ASI's entry fee and not to the tax charged by the Agra Development Authority.

Maps and Audio guides for foreign tourists

2975. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to provide maps and audio guides to the foreign tourists at monuments/museums;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a beginning has been made in the matter;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether it is proposed to cover the religious hubs/monuments in Orissa under this project?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (e) Publicity material like posters, brochures, films, CDs etc. is distributed through India Tourism offices in India and abroad for providing information to both domestic and foreign tourists. A proposal for providing audio-guide services to the tourists at selected monuments is under consideration. There is no specific proposal regarding Orissa.

Memorial on Abhay Ghat

2976. SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposed to develop a Memorial on Abhay Ghat in the memory of former Prime Minister of India, late Shri Morarji Desai;

(b) if so, the steps taken in this regard; and

(c) by when it is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) A memorial of Shri Morarji Desai named 'Abhay Ghat' has been constructed at the bank of river Sabarmati, District Kheda, Gujarat. The construction work started in July, 1997 and was completed in March, 1999.

Construction works by Army Near Taj Mahal

†2977. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the army has undertaken some construction work near the Taj Mahal;

(b) whether the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has served them with notice;

(c) whether the construction work by the army is likely to damage the Taj; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and latest position thereto?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) The army has not undertaken any construction work near the Taj Mahal. However, the army has started some construction activity on its land near Agra Fort.

(b) Yes, Sir. The work has been stopped in the absence of a licence from ASI.

(c) and (d) Question does not arise.

Identification of heritage sites in the country

†2978. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of places where cultural heritage centres and other heritage places have been indentified in other States including Delhi as on date and their locations;

(b) the arrangements made for their safety and protection by the Central Government and State Governments;

(c) the amount spent for this purpose during the last three fiscal years; and

(d) the details of proposals sent by State Governments in this regard?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.